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MEMORANDUM

November 9, 1962

TO: The Vice President

FROM: HB

SUBJECT: U. S. Policy Toward Cuba

In discussions of U. S. policy toward Cuba, these points should be advanced for consideration:

1. The key policy objective in the Department of State memorandum of September 25, 1962, is that of getting rid of "Soviet Communist influence." This objective must remain foremost. The U. S. is dealing directly with the Soviet. In these negotiations, the Soviet has acknowledged, by implication, its offensive intent. Furthermore, Chairman Khrushchev specifically acknowledged that the purpose of the presence of Soviet personnel in Cuba was to command and control the offensive weapons. Hence, it is an entirely valid U. S. position to insist upon withdrawal of Soviet personnel -- and, thus, Soviet influence -- on the basis that offensive weapons and offensive personnel are inseparable.

2. If the objective of forcing Soviet withdrawal of personnel is pursued, this will retain for the U. S. a position of initiative in negotiations until the very end. Khrushchev, certainly, is unlikely to fight over the right to maintain personnel in Cuba. U. S. insistence on withdrawal of personnel -- i.e., stripping Castro of the last vestige of foreign support -- would be constructive in maintaining public trust of the Administration, in maintaining a position which allies in both Hemispheres could continue to support, in encouraging Latin allies to outlaw Communist Parties and to control possible Soviet infiltration through oversize Embassy missions.

3. Pinpointing our negotiating objectives on the withdrawal of offensive Soviet personnel from Cuba would make it possible for the U. S. to maintain a better position in relations with Latin allies than if we focus on the issue of overthrowing Castro. U. S. declarations of intent to "get rid of Castro" could eventually turn Latin sentiment back into Castro's favor. By keeping the emphasis on Soviet personnel would serve to enlarge the image of Castro as a Soviet puppet.

4. Unless the withdrawal of Soviet "influence" -- i.e., personnel -- is incorporated into our negotiating objectives, the Administration's present course will stimulate a non-constructive national debate over what weapons can or cannot be tolerated in Cuba. The American public is unlikely to appreciate the fine points of the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons. Indications on our part of willingness to permit the continuation of any Soviet-made weapons in Cuba creates a situation permitting Khrushchev to retain his personnel in Cuba on the predicate -- already relayed in his messages -- that the Soviet officers must be kept there to retain control of the weapons in the "interest of peace."

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5. If the U. S. argues against Soviet personnel in Cuba, it is inevitable that Khrushchev would reciprocate by arguing against American personnel in countries bordering the Soviet. Provoking him into this position might well be beneficial as a basis for our saying that the solution to the troop deployment issue lies in negotiations between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. on disarmament.

6. Under any circumstances, our policy should remind the world throughout these negotiations that Khrushchev -- the new apostle of "peace" -- sent his personnel to this Hemisphere for purposes which he has tacitly admitted to be offensive and aggressive.